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ABSTRACT

This monograph first reviews a theory of individual communication behavior and points out the similarities between that theory and the observed activities of public relations practitioners. It then reviews the literature of formal organizations to extend the theory to more complex systems. Next, it operationalizes this expanded theory and reports the results of a field study of public relations practitioners designed to test the hypotheses derived from the theory. Finally, it discusses the implications of the theory and this research for the teaching and practice of public relations. (Author)

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JAMES E. GRUNIG

Organizations and Public Relations: Testing a Communication Theory

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Improving public relations for an individual or an institution is not a matter of using this or that tool or technique to bring about the desired effect. The total person or institution needs to be brought into a better relationship or adjustment with the environment upon which he or it depends (Bernays, 1952, preface).

Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Cutlip and Center, 1971: 6).

An editor tells his readers: "If you want to get plausible disguises for unworthy causes, hire a public relations expert." (Cutlip and Center, 1971: 3).

The flack is the modern equivalent of the cavalier highwayman of old. . . A flack is a flack. His job is to say kind things about his client. He will not lie very often, but much of the time he tells less than the whole story (*APME Guidelines*, as quoted in Cutlip and Center 1971:409).

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OPINIONS vary widely with regard to the behavior of the public relations practitioner. Whereas journalists in the news media often think of him as a manipulator of the press, practitioners generally view their role as essential to preservation of open communication in a free society and as a valuable supplement to a free press.

No doubt both the critics and supporters of public relations are correct. Under its ideal role prescription, practitioners are valuable mediators who facilitate communication between an organization and its publics. But the role also prescribes that they exist to advance the cause of self-serving organizations.

Few, if any, researchers have attempted to explain why the behavior of public relations practitioners varies so widely within that prescription. Some might argue that the typical "flak" simply lacks professional training or that he fails to adhere to a code of ethics. The literature on the behavior of organizations, on the other hand, would indicate that the behavior of the public relations practitioner is largely determined by the structure of the organization and the practitioner's role in that structure.

Public relations educators generally have assumed that students can be taught to be successful professionals if they learn "how-to" theories, case studies and rules of thumb which tell them how to communicate successfully. But few educators have asked what happens to this student when he goes to work for a real-world organization. Can he help that organization adapt to the environment when more often the organization wants him to adapt the environment to fit the organization?

The central question to be explored in this monograph is: how do public relations practitioners behave in the real world? When do some engage in informative and two-way communication and others in one-way, manipulative communication? Why are some flaks and some what Robinson (1966) calls applied social scientists? And, most importantly, what relationship does the structure of the organization and the nature of its environment have with the activities of its public relations practitioners?

To answer these questions, this monograph takes a general systems approach to explain the public relations activities of organizations. An important assumption of general systems theory, as applied in many natural and social sciences, is that the same concepts and theories may be applied to a variety of behavioral systems (Bertalanffy, 1968:14). General systems theory gives us reason to believe there may be similarities between the behavior of individuals and the behavior of other systems. Westley (1966), for example, has pointed out a number of instances in which individual-level theories (balance, congruity and dissonance theories) have been applied at the interpersonal and community level.

Systems are generally defined as a "whole" which consists of a set of interrelated elements, each of which affects every other element.[1] A system consists of subsystems and is itself a part of a supra-system. Thus, a system may be viewed from any of several possible levels of analysis, such as the individual, the dyad, the small group, the organization, the public or the community. Systems can also be distinguished from their environment by a boundary. Living systems, then, are generally open systems in which communication takes place across that boundary.

In this monograph, we apply this general systems approach in an effort to expand a theory of communication behavior which has been used in several studies to explain the communication behavior of individuals and publics (Grunig, 1966, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1974a, 1974b, 1975a, 1975b, 1976). We view the organization as a behavioral system and the communication behavior of its public relations unit as an instance of organizational communication in order to explain public relations behavior in terms of the characteristics and behavior of the organization in which the unit is located. We also ask whether the professionalism of the practitioner serves as a mediating factor between organization and practitioner to allow the practitioner to change an organization rather than to simply occupy a role and function as a cog in the behavior of the organization.

This monograph first reviews a theory of individual communication behavior and points out the similarities between that theory and the observed activities of public relations practitioners. Then it reviews the literature of formal organizations to extend the theory to more complex systems. Next, it operationalizes this

expanded theory and reports the results of a field study of public relations practitioners designed to test the hypotheses derived from the theory. Finally, it discusses the implications of the theory and this research for the teaching and practice of public relations.

A Theory of Communication Behavior

Communications researchers have until recent years viewed communication primarily as a means of influencing people. Most of their theoretical paradigms[2] have centered upon a source with a message, and have asked under what conditions the message has had an effect upon the receiver desired by the source. With Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, however, we turned to the information-seeking behavior of potential message recipients[3] and have begun to ask under what conditions people in different cognitive states seek different kinds of information. In general, however, it is still done to understand how to influence people.

Carter (1973) took a third approach by treating communication as a dependent variable—as an aspect of behavior rather than an independent variable which influences behavior. He defined communication as a means by which people acquire and disseminate pictures of reality in order to direct (control) their movements both alone and in company with other people. Thus, from Carter's perspective there is no difference between source and receiver. Communication is simply a human behavior.

The theory presented here models the conditions under which individuals are most often motivated to communicate. The theory had previously been used primarily to model the communication behavior of individuals in audiences and publics. Here it is extended to model the behavior of an organization, both as a giver and as a seeker of information.[4]

To explain communication behavior, the theory utilizes two dimensions of an individual's relationship with a situation: 1) the extent to which a person recognizes a problem in his situation at any point in time (i.e., that the situation is lacking in something that he needs or wants), and 2) the extent to which constraints (which the individual acting alone cannot control) limit his behavior.

The first dimension, problem recognition, is based in large part on Dewey's (1938) theory of inquiry, in which he proposed that individuals inquire (seek information) and think (make and use pictures) only when they face an indeterminate situation. Otherwise, they tend to repeat behaviors they have used in similar situations in the past—*i.e.*, they rely on habit. Similar concepts may also be found in Katona (1953:309), Carter (1965), Simon (1957) and Cyert and March (1963).

This proposition holds that people do not attempt to change the direction of their movements except in a situation that is problematic to them, and that they have no need to communicate in nonproblematic situations. Even when people identify problems, however, the theory recognizes what Cyert and March (1963) call decision rules or what Dewey (1922) calls intelligent habits. Decision rules are formed when an individual generalizes successful outcomes from previous problematic situations and applies them in new situations. A person who recognizes a problematic situation uses decision rules to compress information. The decision rules are codes, as the concept has been used by Biggs (1968). Codes are abstractions which compress information to allow more to pass through the short-term memory at one time. Broad codes (which allow for problem recognition) are the essence of learning and knowledge, according to Biggs, whereas rigid codes characterize people who "stick to past habits and ways of thinking" (p. 49).

The second dimension, the existence of constraints, may be characterized as the extent to which the structure of an individual's situation is open to innovation. Maslow (1963:117), for example, has distinguished between two kinds of reality—the natural world and the psychic world, the "world of unyielding facts and the world of wishes, hopes, fears and emotions." This natural world of unyielding facts is what the theory describes as constraints. In general, people cannot move across barriers to their movement, and, in general, they do not communicate in order to attempt to direct such constrained movements. They do actively communicate, however, when they are not fully aware the constraints exist or that they cannot somehow be circumvented.

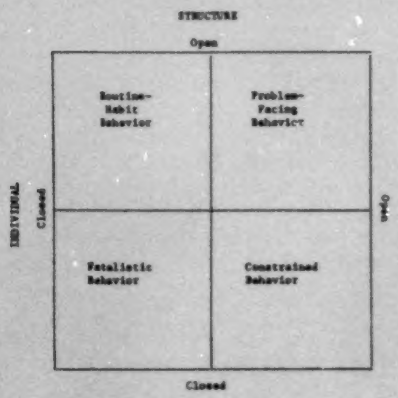
These two dimensions can be combined to produce four general types of situations in which different types of communication

behaviors have a strong probability of occurring. These four situations may be visualized as the four quadrants of a Cartesian coordinate system (Figure 1) on which the horizontal axis indicates the extent to which the individual is open or closed (the situation is recognized as problematic) and the vertical axis indicates the relative openness of the structure (the existence of constraints).

Arbitrarily, these four types of situations may be labeled problem-facing behavior, routine-habit behavior, constrained behavior and fatalistic behavior. A person will be most likely to communicate and attempt to direct his movement in the problem-facing situation. What he chooses to communicate about depends upon his problem orientation in that situation—those problems that are most important or relevant to him. In the situation characterized by routine habit behavior, the person generally moves automatically. He communicates only to seek information to reinforce his habitual behavior or to give information to defend it. In the constrained behavior situation, the person generally moves within the relevant constraints. Because he recognizes a problem in his situation, however, he continues to seek means of eliminating or circumventing his constraints; thus, he generally communicates actively until he realizes the constraints cannot be altered. The person in the fatalistic situation generally moves

FIGURE 1

A Situational Model of Communication Behavior



toward the alternative which he is constrained to adopt. He does not recognize anything as lacking in his situation, however. Therefore, he is apathetic and seldom communicates about his situation.[5]

In extending this theory to the system level of the organization, we hypothesize that organizations as well as individuals can be classified according to the frequency of being in these four types of situations. Although it is probable that an organization will use more than one of these behaviors as a result of being in different situations, the organizational literature seems to indicate that organizational structure and the environments of organizations tend to present organizations with consistently similar situations. Although this is a situational theory, we make the simplifying assumption that situations of a given organization tend to fall consistently into the same theoretical category, thus making it possible to hypothesize four organizational types. If these four types are found to exist, they may be used to predict the public relations behavior of an organization, while controlling for the effect of individual professionalism in mediating the relationship between organizational structure and public relations behavior.

In particular, it is hypothesized that the behavior of the organization will be related to its use of *synchronic* as opposed to *diachronic* public relations activities. The terms are taken from Thayer's (1968:129-130) two modes of "intercommunication":

> In the synchronic mode, the consequence sought or realized is the "synchronization" of the participants. It is the sort of encounter in which one of the participants, Y, has as his objective either *a*) bringing the psychological state of another person, Z, from its present apparent-state-of-affairs to the state-of-affairs desired or intended by Y, or *b*) behavior achieving some intended state-of-affairs through the actions or behavior of Z. In both cases, Z is the "sink" for Y's message. . .
>
> The end sought or realized from a communicative encounter in the diachronic mode is either *a*) a new state-of-affairs between Y and Z, or *b*) a new state-of-affairs between Y and Z and their respective environments. But, unlike the synchronic mode, the diachronic mode does not hinge upon the resolution of one of the other's intended-state-of-affairs, but upon a joint or cooperative effort to achieve *whatever* result comes from the encounter. [Original stress.]

In other words, in the diachronic mode, information seeking (e.g., to assess a common problem) generally precedes information

giving (e.g., to propose a solution to the problem). In the synchronic mode, however, information giving comes first (being intended to change the receiver) and is followed by information seeking in the form of feedback (which reveals whether the desired change has occurred).[6]

The literature on organizations indicates that because they are basically conservative and concerned with control of their subsystems and their environment, organizations more frequently adopt synchronic communication procedures than diachronic procedures. We would predict, however, that problem-facing organizations would most often adopt diachronic procedures whereas routine habit organizations would adopt synchronic procedures. Constrained-decision and fatalistic organizations probably would adopt neither.

For a problem-facing organization, the public relations role would be defined as monitoring the environment, attempting to understand the public's point of view and communicating it to management, as well as explaining the behavior of the organization to the public. Routine habit organizations would probably define the function as persuasion, influence, attitude change, "economic education," or the like. This type of defensive communication would be most likely to occur when the organization is under attack or when it confronts a crisis. Information seeking from the public would be rare and would consist only of the seeking of feedback, or a reaction to its defensive initiatives.

If a constrained organization has a public relations function, its primary communication contact would be with organizations facing similar constraints or with organizations capable of removing constraints, through activities such as government relations, lobbying and political organization, and contacts with policy makers. Most fatalistic organizations probably would not conceive of a need for any form of public relations. If such an organization had a public relations department, it would probably play a passive communications role—supplying information only when requested from outside.

Historical and case study evidence lends particular support to the notion that routine habit organizations give information primarily at the time of a crisis. In his biography of Ivy Lee, Hiebert (1966) pointed out that Lee began his career in public relations

when he recognized the need for someone to help business present its point of view to the public at a time when business was under attack from the "muckrakers." Then, he added (p. 308), "As advisor to many far-flung operations, Ivy Lee was constantly on the go. . . . Life was a perpetual crisis, a strike, a Ludlow affair, a Teapot Dome scandal, a revolution."

A review of master's and doctoral theses on public relations, as reported in *Journalism Abstracts*, yields several seeming instances of routine habit organizations at work. There are examples of defensive information giving during a crisis: the Department of Defense when 6,000 sheep were killed (Tilford, 1970), a power company threatened by government ownership (Finklestein, 1970) and the conclusion that educational public relations departments are formed during intense financial need or after public criticism (Levitt, 1969).

Other theses document instances of information giving to support a special cause: the Sierra Club (Chapman, 1970), the War on Poverty (Reiley, 1969), teacher unions (McAvoy, 1969), the AMA fighting Medicare (Airulla, 1969), competition between a private and a cooperative electric utility (Brown, 1968), the National Right to Work Committee (Jackson, 1967), Ohio hospitals (Martin, 1967), four Pennsylvania colleges (Bowers, 1963), Oklahoma hospitals (Morgan, 1963), the Assembly of God church (Jackson, 1963) and local church leaders (Booz, 1962).

Numerous other theses support the notion that defensive information giving occurs more often than information seeking. These theses state such conclusions as "the public relations department mostly issues press releases" or "relies too much on publicity" or this organization could "utilize more public relations research." Schabacker (1963) found, for example, that although a fourth to a third of the news items in five Milwaukee media originated from public relations sources, "gatekeepers rejected 1,789 releases in a week," most of which he describes as "meaningless, attention-seeking trivia that some practitioners pass on as news."

While these theses give only sketchy evidence of the validity of the theory and support only the routine habit concept, they do suggest the theory has merit. The next task, then, is to extend the theory to make it more applicable in an organizational setting. To do this, we turned to the literature on complex organizations to

search for variables which more amply describe the nature of the four kinds of organizations, and then to search for means of operationalizing, in an organizational setting, the concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication and the practitioner's level of professionalism.

Organizational Characteristics and Communication Procedures

The earliest students of organizations, the scientific management school, analyzed human beings in organizations essentially as they would machines and then devised "scientific" rules to maximize man-machine productivity and efficiency. A second major approach to organizations, the human relations school, developed as a reaction to scientific management. Human relations advocates place emphasis on the "people" in organizations rather than on the rules and structure that control them. Thus, such concepts as leadership, communication and group decision making are of great importance to this school.

At first the human relations approach seemed to be useful for our purposes because of its emphasis on communication. But more careful examination shows that communication is often treated as a panacea by human relations advocates. In their minds, communication in organizations is all good and conflict is all bad. There is no attempt to explain organizational communication in terms of organizational rather than individual variables (Perrow, 1973:143).

In building an organizational theory of public relations, we chose to utilize some human relations concepts, but most of them were taken from two additional schools of thought about organizations—the decision making and structural approaches.

The decision making approach is essentially the creation of Herbert Simon, James G. March and Richard M. Cyert, theorists with roots in the psychology of decision making, in public administration and in economics. The structural school is primarily a sociological approach to organizations. According to Perrow (1970), it combines the scientific management and human relations approaches, placing primary emphasis on organizational variables such as technology, centralization and formalization, yet examining the impact of structure on human behavior. The structural approach differs from human relations, however, in that

structure is considered the paramount cause of individual behavior in an organization, not the other way around.

To operationalize this communication situation theory at the organizational level, the structural, decision-making and human relations approaches were combined, because, as Buck (1966:169) points out, both organizational structure and individual behavior in organizations "dynamically interact." The task was outlined in four stages: 1) variables were developed to approximate the problem recognition and constraint dimensions, 2) structural variables were identified to make it possible to measure and locate the four hypothesized types of organizations, 3) relevant organizational communication variables were developed and 4) professionalization scales were constructed.

Problem-Recognition Variables. The organizational literature is rife with concepts which deal with the problem-recognition dimension and lend support to the idea that organizations which do not recognize problems tend to have specific structural attributes, are found in routine, unchanging environments, and do not engage in information search. This dimension can be found in March and Simon's (1958:139) routinized and problem-solving responses of organizations to stimuli from the environment, Hall's (1972:36) rationality norms (which allow decisions to be made routinely) and survival norms, Thompson's (1967:71-72) and Perrow's (1972:25,31) discussions of an organization's use of rules, Haas, Hall and Johnson's (1966:159) use of the concept of an organizational problem, Crozier's (1964) case studies of French organizations characterized by ponderous bureaucratic routine, Wilensky's (1967:78) discussion of an organization's capacity to avoid changing its cherished convictions, Burns and Stalker's (1962:119-123) concepts of mechanistic and organic organizations, and Bennis' (1959:299) use of the concepts of problem-solving and habit to characterize leadership patterns in organizations.

Finally, we can note similarities to the problem-recognition dimension in Etzioni's (1964:16-19) contrast between the systems model (reaction to problems) and the goal model (seeking a pre-determined end), in V. A. Thompson's contrast between a monocratic and innovative organization, in Schein's (1970:120)

adaptive, coping cycle, and in Hage and Aiken's (1972:64) concepts of dynamic and static organizational systems.

Katz and Kahn (1966:104) apply to organizations the general systems concept of system openness, an application which makes it possible for us to use "system openness" to subsume the communication situation theory's lower-order concept of the "openness of the individual." The literature thus leaves little doubt that the problem-recognition dimension can be applied at the organizational level.

There is ample evidence to support the theoretical postulate that organizations which recognize problems are most likely to search for information (March and Simon, 1958:140; Thompson, 1967:72; Wilensky, 1967:78; Burns and Stalker, 1962:120-121). Organizational researchers further enrich the theory by reporting evidence that organizations are most likely to recognize problems when the environment is constantly changing, and problem-laden (Hall, 1972:36; Thompson, 1967:72; Katz and Kahn, 1966:104; Burns and Stalker, 1961:119-123; Wilensky, 1967:78).

Finally, the literature points directly to the structural characteristics of organizations which do not recognize problems. Hage and Aiken's 1972 book summarizes these characteristics best. "The structural arrangements of a dynamic organization are high complexity, low centralization, low formalization and low stratification" (p. 66). On the other hand, "the characteristics of a highly static organization are low complexity, high centralization, high formalization and high stratification" (p. 68). Similar structural characteristics have, likewise, been reported by Crozier (1964:186) and Burns and Stalker (1961:119-123).

Three concepts from the organizational literature subsumed by the problem-recognition dimension were actually measured in this study: *programmed behavior*, *organizational codes* and *organizational tradition*. Each would indicate lack of problem recognition.

The concept of programmed behavior comes from March and Simon (1958:187); it represents the extent to which organizations devote resources to carrying on existing programs rather than to searching for and initiating new programs. Perrow (1972:155-160), Burns (1967:158) and Crozier (1964:150), all incorporate this concept, which is also essentially the same as Hage and Aiken's (1970a:38) "rate of program change," Wilson's

(1966:208) adoption of innovations and the "flexible" organization of Pugh, *et al.* (1963).

A second concept subsumed by the system openness variable is that of system codes, discussed above in relation to individuals. According to Katz and Kahn (1966:59):

> System coding is the major procedure for insuring specification for the intake of information and energy, and it thus describes the actual functioning of barriers separating the system from its environment. One of the significant characteristics of any system is the selective intake of energy and information and the transformation of that input according to the nature of the system. Social systems develop their own mechanisms for blocking out certain types of alien influence and for transforming what is received according to a series of coding categories. . . .

Codes should be more rigid when an organization becomes routinized and shut off from its environment. Since codes are reflected in language, the more rigid the code the more likely it is that the language of the organization will be unintelligible to the outsider, tending to close the organization to outside influence (Landau, 1972:101). Thus code rigidity was determined by asking public relations practitioners how much difficulty they have in explaining their organization to outsiders.

The final lower order concept operationalized in this study was the importance of tradition to the organization. Tradition helps an organization to preserve and maintain its organizational form (Stinchcombe, 1965) and to develop a value system helpful to the organization in resisting external pressures for change (Hall, 1972:311-12).

Constraint Variables. Organizational theorists also use concepts similar to the constraint dimension. To deal with it, however, requires distinctions among system levels. The external environment may place constraints on the organization as a suprasystem, and the organization may in turn place constraints around the subsystems and individuals within the organization. Buck (1966:116-17), for example, points out that decisions by individuals high in an organization become constraints surrounding decisions by individuals one level below. Thus individuals at the lowest levels make maximally constrained decisions. Thayer (1968:95,97) says:

it is important to recognize that what gets organized in any organization are the rules and relations which guide and regulate the behavior of its members. . . . (The) function of constraints is to limit the *degrees of freedom* (or the prerogatives of personally choosing, judging, etc.) relative to any particular task-function which an individual might otherwise exercise.

March and Simon (1958:170-1) discuss internal organizational constraints in terms of "bounded Rationality" and the "premises of decision making." Perrow (1972:152) has added that the "superior has the power or tools to structure the environment and perceptions of the subordinate in such a way that he sees the proper things and in the proper light." To Crozier (1964:150), the "constraints of technical and organizational origins" are "organizational givens." And to Burns (1967:158), "programmed decisionmaking is what it is because of the institutional frameowrk around the individual."

Organizational theorists also point out that internal constraints largely determine the nature of human relationships within organizations. According to Buck (1966:168), "It does not matter that a plant manager has had sensitivity training if the constraints confronting him force him to attempt impossible situations. And, according to Blau and Schoenherr (1971:300), "fundamental structural conditions exert constraints on the members of organizations that make their administrative decisions virtually independent of their psychological dispositions."

At the level of an organization's external communication, Thompson (1967:30) stresses the constraints imposed by the task environment.[7] Maniha and Perrow (1965) demonstrate that an aggressive environment can influence organizational behavior: how a city youth commission which "had little reason to be formed, no goals to guide it, and which was staffed by people who sought to insure a minimal no-action role" was seized by other organizations to achieve their own goals. Hage and Aiken (1970:73) likewise conclude that static organizations are the products of static environments.

Other authors have concluded that stable organizations are forced to change when the environment no longer supports their products or services or when a new organization tries to establish ties with their environments (Hall, 1972:74, 308; Perrow, 1972:189; Thompson, 1967:71). Still others have concluded that

complex organizations are most likely to be found in complex environments (Blau and Schoenherr, 1971:168; Burns, 1967:149). Perrow (1972:199) and Etzioni (1961) have also argued, however, that large and powerful organizations may control their environments more effectively than the environment controls them.

Because this study was primarily concerned with the organization as a system, only external constraint variables were measured. There were six of these. Two—technology and mechanization—are basically defined by the kind of output which the organization produces.[8] The first technology variable was Perrow's (1967, 1970:90) *routine* vs. *non-routine technology*,[9] the difference between tasks that are "well understood, predictable, routine and repetitive" and "tasks that are not well understood, generally because the 'raw material' that each person works on is poorly understood and possibly reactive, recalcitrant or self activating" (1972:166).

A second technology variable measured here was Thompson's (1967:15-18) concepts of *long-linked, intensive* and *mediating technology*: "A long-linked technology involves serial interdependence in the sense that act Z can be performed only after successful completion of act Y, which in turn rests on act X, and so on." The assembly line is an example of such technology. Mediating organizations "link clients or customers who are or wish to be independent." Examples of mediating organizations include banks, insurance companies, a telephone company, the post office and an employment agency. With intensive technology, "a variety of techniques is drawn upon in order to achieve a change in some specific object; but the selection, combination and order of application are determined by feedback from the object itself." Examples include hospitals, the construction industry and military combat teams.

The extent of mechanization, like the kind of technology, is often determined by the nature of the product or service provided. Both Crozier (1964) and Blau and Schoenherr (1971) have found mechanization to be an important organizational constraint.

The four other constraints measured here come directly from the environment. These include the stability or instability of *demand* for the organization's services and products (Hage and Aiken, 1970:77), the amount of *competition* to produce the same

product of service (Hall, 1972:73,303) the degree of *social and political support* for the organization (Hall, 1972:73-74; Thompson, 1967:68) and the growth or lack of growth of *knowledge* upon which the organization depends (Hage and Aiken, 1970:74).

Organizational structure variables. The literature on organizations thus far supports the general systems assumption that organizations as well as individuals fit into the categories of communication behavior outlined earlier. It also indicates that these types of organizations have specific, identifiable structural attributes—especially as outlined by Hage and Aiken. In this section we isolate structural attributes which will help both the researcher and professional identify and locate these organizational types.

Structural variables describe the organization, not the individuals within it. According to Perrow (1970:2), "the structural viewpoint considers the roles people play, rather than the nature of the personalities in these roles." Burns and Stalker (1961:3) agree. V. A. Thompson (1961:7) defines it as the "persistent qualities or given elements in the environmental conditions of choice or action which make it possible to explain and perhaps to predict action." Katz and Kahn (1966:20-21) explain structure as the "interrelated set of events which return upon themselves to complete and renew a cycle of activities." Blau and Schoenherr (1971:300) add: "The gist of a social structure is that people differ in status and social affiliation, that they occupy different positions and ranks, and that they belong to different groups and subunits of various sorts. . . ." Perhaps these definitions can be integrated by saying that structure is a role relationship or cycle of role relationships between individuals which is not under the control of any one of those individuals acting alone.[10]

There is a great deal of debate in the literature on the relative effect of individual personalities and organizational structure on the behavior of organizations and people in organizations. Only structural researchers, however, appear to have tested the relative value of these two sets of variables in explaining organizational behavior. For example, in a comparative study of organizations, Hage and Aiken (1970:122; 1967) found that "structural properties were much more highly associated with the rate of program change than were attitudes toward change."[11] Earlier, Aiken and Hage (1966) had reported that certain structures (centralization

and formalization) caused certain attitudinal states (alienation from work and from expressive relations). Porter and Lawler (1969:428), however, concluded that structural variables have a clearer impact on attitudes than on behavior.

Much of the controversy could be settled, however, by specifying which system level—the individual or the organization—the researcher is most interested in. As Perrow (1972:143) concludes:

> One cannot explain organizations by explaining the attitudes and behavior of individuals or even small groups within them. We learn a great deal about psychology and social psychology but little about organizations *per se* in this fashion.

Since this study is concentrating on the organization as the primary level of analysis, the structural approach would seem to be appropriate here. Therefore, 10 structural variables frequently used in organizational research were included in this study. They included size, age, complexity, centralization, formalization, stratification, amount of production, efficiency and compliance patterns.

Although size has been studied frequently as an organizational variable, there is little agreement on its effect. Blau and Schoenherr (1971:300-331) uncovered "the pervasive effect of size," an effect which they believe occurs because increasing size leads to "structural differentiation," which in turn "raises demands for managerial manpower" and "intensifies problems of communication and coordination." Hall (1972:Ch. 4) and Hage and Aiken (1970:131) believe that size means different things under different conditions of complexity and technology and thus is not itself an important organizational variable. All, however, agree that size has a large effect on communication.

Blau and Schoenherr (1971) found, for example, that organizational components increase in size as overall size increases. Given this finding, one would expect large organizations to have large public relations staffs. Large organizations, however, probably are less likely to use public relations to monitor the environment. Landau (1972:98-9) indicates that "intermediate" organizations are more likely to be innovative and problem solving (and thus, in our view, information seeking). The intermediate organization in Landau's words:

> . . . is by design (intention) nondeterministic in structure. The extent to which its internal processes are predictable and controllable is limited. That is, its structure is *less complete procedurally*. Its basic processes are not fully established, rules are neither comprehensive nor exact, lines of authority are less formal—often equivocal and ambiguous, jurisdictions overlap, its communications are diverse and multichannelled, its categories are not mutually exclusive and its codes are more natural (less formal).

Age of the organization is not studied as often as most of the other structural variables. For an organizational theory of public relations, however, it would seem to be an important variable. Organizational tradition (a component of routine habit) would be expected to increase with the age of the organization (Stincombe, 1965), and an intermediate organization could be expected to be younger than a bureaucratic organization.

Katz and Kahn (1966:78-83) theorize that there are three stages of age or time in the development of organizational structure. Stage 1 is a primitive system where people unite because of a common environmental problem. In Stage 2, a stable organizational structure begins to emerge, a set of rules is established and subsystems form. Finally, in Stage 3, organizations elaborate their structure and develop supportive structures at their boundaries to secure and institutionalize environmental support. At this stage, communication—externally at least—would appear to consist primarily of defensive information giving. It may be that public relations as traditionally practiced does not become a part of the organization until this third stage (p. 141):

> Here subsystems develop within the organization to institutionalize environmental relationships and guarantee such support. An organization will often have separate departments for merchandising, advertising, and selling; for recruiting and selecting personnel; for procuring raw materials; and for public relations and contact with the larger society.

Complexity is one of the most commonly studied attributes of organizations. The term complexity is used loosely in the literature, often equated with rigidity, formality or bureaucracy. Those who define complexity, however, generally look upon it as an attribute of a dynamic organization. It is, for example, the one positive attribute of Hage and Aiken's (1970) dynamic organization.

Hage and Aiken (1970:15-18) measure complexity by the number of occupations, the extensiveness of training, the intricacy of tasks performed and the degree to which organization members attempt to gain greater knowledge about their work activities and the overall activities of their organizations. Hall, Haas and Johnson (1967:903-912) operationalize complexity as the extent of division of labor (number of departments and subdivisions), number of vertical levels of control in the organization and the extent of spatial dispersion of facilities and personnel. Blau (1968) and Blau and Schoenherr (1971) operationize complexity in a similar fashion.

Wilson (1966:200) departs from other theorists in predicting that complex organizations will actually adopt fewer innovations because in a complex structure more people are affected by change and thus there is more resistance to change.

Complex organizations should be more likely than less complex organizations to have a public relations department. For example, Pugh, *et al.* (1968:92-3) include the existence of public relations, publicity, customer relations and product publicity staffs as part of their index of specialization (conceptually the same as complexity). One would also expect complex organizations to be problem solving (or to have problem solving subsystems) and that a public relations department in such an organization would be likely to use a diachronic approach.

As an organizational variable, *centralization* is studied about as often as complexity. Centralization may be defined as the extent to which decision-making is concentrated in upper reaches of the organizational hierarchy (Pugh, *et al.*, 1968; Hage and Aiken, 1970:18-21). Centralization may also be conceptualized as the difference between a tall and a flat hierarchical structure (Triandis, 1966:66). In a flat structure, a single manager has control over a large number of subunits whereas in a tall structure subunits report through a series of levels before reaching a top executive.

Based on the organizational literature, we could expect that less centralized organizations would be more likely to be problem-solving organizations. Hage and Aiken (1970:66-68) and Hage (1965), for example, found centralization to be inversely related to program change. Likewise, Blau (1968) concludes that "the modern organization is characterized by a tall, slim hierarchy with

decentralized authority. The opposite type, which may be called old-fashioned bureaucracy, has a squat hierarchy with authority centralized at the top."

Two aspects of public relations practice could be expected to be directly related to centralization and they were measured in this study. First, we could expect the publications, press releases and statements to the press would require clearance by more people outside the public relations department in centralized organizations. Second, we would predict that public relations personnel would have less autonomy in making decisions about general public relations policy in a centralized organization.

The extent to which the public relations department is centralized in the organizational hierarchy would also seem to have a strong effect on the performance of that unit. Katz and Kahn (1966:253) argue that information systems should be placed high in the hierarchy so that information can reach top administrators without being filtered through the system. Wilensky (1967:58), in discussing "organizational intelligence," says, however:

> . . . if intelligence is lodged at the top, too few officials and experts with too little accurate and relevant information are too far out of touch and too overloaded to function effectively; on the other hand if intelligence is scattered throughout many subordinate units, too many officials and experts with too much specialized information may engage in dysfunctional competition, may delay decision while they warily consult each other, and may distort information as they pass it up.

The location of a public relations unit in the hierarchy of an organization should have an effect upon the *power* of that unit in relation to other subsystems. Crozier (1964:163-4) defines power as the extent to which a unit deals with "uncertainty upon which depends the life of the organization." Organizations, however, use rules to reduce discretion and thus the extent of uncertainty and power, he adds. In a decentralized organization, the public relations unit's power probably would not depend upon its location in the hierarchy, since discretionary power is delegated throughout the organization. In a centralized organization, however, the unit would have little power unless it is located at the top of the hierarchy, since rules prevent decision making (uncertainty resolution) at other levels. But it is also possible for administrators to

place public relations high in the organization in a deliberate effort to keep the unit under their control.

The next major structural variable, *formalization* can be defined as the extent to which an organization emphasizes rules and procedures (Hall, 1972:173; Hage and Aiken, 1970:21-3; Pugh, *et al.*, 1968). Formalization is another characteristic of Hage and Aiken's (1970:66-8) static organization. Organizational researchers have operationalized formalization as being indicated by the presence of a printed organization chart and the extent to which this chart is followed (Hall, Haas and Johnson, 1967; Pugh, *et al.*, 1968), the presence of a written set of rules and policies and penalties for violating them (Hall, Haas and Johnson, 1967; Pugh, *et al.*, 1968; Hage and Aiken, 1970), and the use of a formal orientation program for new members weighted by the length of that program (Hall, Haas and Johnson, 1967).

Hage and Aiken (1970:66-8) define *stratification*, another characteristic of a static organization, as "the way in which rewards are distributed among jobs and occupations" (p. 7). They have found that stratification acts as a divisive force by making job occupants competitive. Wilson (1966:214) disagrees, pointing out that "innovative proposals will be more frequent in organizations in which a high degree of uncertainty governs the members' expectations of rewards." Hage and Aiken (1970:66-8) measured stratification in two ways: 1) the extent to which there are sharp dividing lines between status levels and 2) the ease of movement from one level to another.

Hage and Aiken (1970:25-26, 49-52) also include two other structural variables: *amount of production* and *emphasis on efficiency*. They have found that organizations which stress either of these variables generally are not innovative organizations. They define amount of production as the extent to which organizations prefer to increase production volume as rapidly as market conditions warrant as opposed to giving product quality the highest priority. They define the amount of efficiency as simply the extent to which an organization concerns itself with cutting costs.

The final structural variable measured in this study is Etzioni's (1961) typology of compliance. In his preface, Etzioni explains that there are:

three major sources of control whose allocation and manipulation account to a great extent for the foundations of social order. These control sources are coercion, economic assets and normative values. . . . Accordingly, three types of compliance serve as the basis for our comparisons between organizations: coercive, utilitarian and normative compliance.

Etzioni says that organizations may use all three types of power but that they tend to emphasize one at the expense of others because one kind of power tends to neutralize another (p. 6). He lists prisons and custodial mental hospitals as examples of coercive organizations, blue-collar and white-collar industries as examples of utilitarian organizations and religious organizations, professional associations and political organizations as examples of normative organizations (p. 40).

Etzioni's three types of organization seem to have much in common with the decision modes of the model being developed here. Problem facing organizations would probably use utilitarian compliance patterns where routine habit organizations would use normative patterns and constrained behavior organizations would use coercive patterns (when the organization as a suprasystem is viewed as using constraints to control its subsystems). The implications of these compliance patterns for communication also fit the predictions of the behavioral modes. For example, Etzioni (p. 5) points out that normative organizations attempt to manipulate the news media. Internally, most communication is "vertical instrumental" in utilitarian organizations (giving and seeking up and down the hierarchy), downward expressive (reinforcement) in normative organizations and horizontal expressive (sharing frustrations) in coercive organizations (Ch. 6). Using Etzioni's concepts, Julian (1966) found blockages in all forms of internal communication occurred most often in organizations using coercive compliance patterns.

Communication Variables. Human relations and structural researchers differ markedly in their assumptions about communications. Human relations advocates generally assume that communication is a good thing for an organization and that more of it will make the organization more humane and productive. Katz and Kahn (1966:224-5), however, stress the effect of social constraints upon the flow of information and add, "The blanket emphasis upon more communication fails to take into account the function-

ing of an organization as a social system and the specific needs of the subsystems." Schein (1970:35) concludes that systems work better if their parts communicate well with each other but adds that the system must also be committed, creative and flexible.

In essence, the structuralist position is that structure and organizational constraints provide dikes and channels which determine the flow of information. In Hall's words (1972:291):

> . . . the communications system is vitally affected by other structural and processual factors. Communications do not exist outside the total organizational framework. . . . More and more accurate communications do not lead inevitably to greater effectiveness for the organization. The key to the communication process in organizations is to ensure that the correct people get the correct information (in amount and quality) at the correct time.

The structuralist position, as adopted here, does not argue that structure *determines* communication behavior. Rather it assumes that communication behaviors are procedures *invented* by individuals and other behavioral systems (Carter, 1972; Simon, 1969). When they face similar situations (different situational problems and constraints), individuals and organizations can be expected to invent similar procedures and thus structure can be used to explain and predict communication behavior.

The Study

In this study, 16 common public relations procedures were presented to survey respondents who were asked to estimate their frequency of using these procedures. Twelve of the procedures are information-giving activities or evaluations of information giving activities which generally are practiced in Thayer's synchronic mode: writing press releases, conducting formal surveys to evaluate a project, preparing publications, making information contacts with newsmen, making contact with "thought leaders," staging events, preparing audio-visual materials, preparing institutional advertisements, contacting governmental officials and writing speeches.

Four procedures were assumed to be diachronic: conducting formal surveys before a project, conducting informal research before a project, making informal contacts with the public and counseling management on public opinion.

In addition to these specific public relations procedures, this study included other communications variables taken from the organizational literature. Because students of organizational communications have generally been most concerned with effective "management" communication (the researchers themselves have adopted the synchronic mode), most available theory deals with internal communication networks.[12]

Organizational communication theorists have traditionally viewed communication as flowing in three directions within an organization—upward, downward and horizontally (e.g., Guetzkow, 1965; Voos, 1967; Smith, Richetto and Zima, 1972). Others distinguish between the formal communication network and the informal network or "grapevine" (Davis, 1969). In Berelson and Steiner's words (1964:370), vertical communication is distinguished by the fact that: "The communications down the organizational hierarchy are likely to be critical, and the communications up the hierarchy are likely to be commendatory." And they add that: "The more rigidly or formally organized the hierarchy, the less upward flow of informal communications." To simplify matters, we can argue that most downward communication in an organization occurs in the synchronic mode and that most upward communication takes place in a diachronic mode. Both upward and downward communication, then, were included as variables in this study.

Several factors have been found to limit communication by subordinates upward to their superiors. These include formal definitions of status levels (Stogdill, 1966:14), unfamiliar work and responsibilities (Davis, 1967:344) and lack of trust, along with high mobility aspirations (Read, 1962). As Wilensky (1967:43) sums it up:

> . . . information is a resource that symbolizes status, enhances authority, and shapes careers. In reporting at every level, hierarchy is conducive to concealment and misrepresentation. Subordinates are asked to transmit information that can be used to evaluate their performance.

Horizontal communication is communication between peers, or between subsystems at the same vertical level. Udy (1965:704) concludes: "The greater the degree of horizontal communication, the greater the cohesiveness among peers and the higher the morale of the membership." Others, however, have found that

horizontal communication serves to ventilate frustrations arising from constraints (or from shared constrained decisions) and that horizontal communication between subsystems on the same level of the hierarchy is often difficult and hampered by suspicion (Voos, 1967:10-11).

Another approach to internal communications has been that of studying natural rather than hierarchical communication networks. With this approach, a researcher uses sociometric techniques to determine frequency of communication contacts between individuals in an organization. According to Farace and Danowski (1973), this type of analysis allows the identification of "*groups of individuals* who communicate frequently with one another, the *linkers* that allow information to move between groups, and the *isolates* that do not participate in the network defined by the groups and their linkers."

Likert (1967:50) defines a "linking pin" as a member of more than one group who passes information from one to another. For Burns (1967:13) "communication leaks from level to level though 'contact individuals'." Farace and Danowski (1973) conclude that: "Since these individuals have a high degree of control over the flow of information in an organization, their role is relatively more crucial to the effective functioning of the organization than the other participants in the network."

The communication behavior theory again seems capable of explaining these findings. Horizontal communication within subsystems reinforces peers because peers are likely to share problems and constraints. Upward communication is difficult because it takes place between subsystems which tend not to share problems and constraints. Linkers share more than one problem perception or occupy the role of seeking information outside the system.

Several organizational theorists appear to support this conceptualization. Simon (1969:99), says:

> In hierarchic systems, we can distinguish between the interactions *among* the subsystems, on the one hand, and the interactions *within* subsystems—that is, among the parts of those subsystems—on the other. The interactions at the different levels may be, and often will be, of different orders of magnitude. In a formal organization there will generally be more interaction, on the average, between two employees who are members of the same department than between two employees from different departments. In organic substances,

intermolecular forces will generally be weaker than molecular forces, and molecular forces weaker than atomic forces.

V. A. Thompson (1961:105) concludes that communication in organizations tends to follow patterns of constraint. Katz and Kahn (1966:59) come close to the premises of the theory when they say:

> By and large the nature and extent of exchanges among people at the same level should be related to the objectives of the various subsystems in which they are involved, with the primary focus on their own major task. . . . It is interesting to observe how often organizational leaders, when going outside their own structures for information, will seek their own status level, i.e., their counterparts in other organizations. Sometimes, however, the really critical information is at levels below them.

Etzioni (1961:141) points out that organizations also differ in the nature of their internal communication. He contrasts expressive and instrumental communication, a distinction included as a variable in this study: ". . . normative organizations emphasize downward expressive communication; utilitarian organizations emphasize vertical instrumental communication; while in coercive organizations vertical channels tend to be blocked, and there is a great deal of expressive horizontal communication."

While internal organizational communication has been studied extensively, little work has been done on the external communications of organizations. Nevertheless, what has been done fits well with the behavioral theory presented here. Katz and Kahn's (1966:59) "system openness" closely approximates "problem recognition." They define system openness as the degree to which the system is receptive to all types of inputs. "System boundaries refer to the types of barrier conditions between the system and its environment which makes for degrees of system openness. . . . (T)he boundary is the area where a lower interchange of energy or information occurs than in the system proper." Etzioni (1964:98-100) suggests that few organizations have institutionalized lines of communication outside the organization. Communication with clients, for example, "can be bad for the organization man" because such interaction is generally concentrated in lower reaches of the organization. If a person is "successful with clients, promotion to the next, less client-centered level is more difficult."

Janowitz and Delany (1957) found this to be true of public administrators. Bureaucrats higher in a governmental organization knew more of the perspective of the general citizenry while those lower in the organization knew more of the perspective of the clientele. Grunig (1974a) found, however, that in a community development agency individuals at all levels had equally high communicatory accuracy with the clientele.

While these studies dealt with client communication, communication with other publics could be expected to take place similarly. An organization tends to seek reinforcement unless it is a problem-solving or open system, or until it is jolted by its environment.[13] When the organization is thus threatened, more internal communication tends to take place (Udy, 1965:692; Berelson and Steiner, 1964:370; Triandis, 1966:8), either to preserve the status quo by integrating the organization, or to adapt the organization to its environment by coordinating its response to a common problem.

Threat also increases external communication. At such a time the organization might form its first public relations department or hire its first public relations counsel. In a "mechanistic" organization, as in Burns and Stalker (1961:preface), the public relations department could become a mere appendage whose survival depends on the "perpetuation of the difficulty" or use public relations to "influence newspapers" to protect itself (Olson, 1971:11). However it is possible that a problem solving organization facing a changing environment would form a public relations department to engage in information seeking. Hage and Aiken (1970:90) found that when a hospital became complex and dynamic, it added public relations personnel, among others.

In experimental research, Pearce and Stamm (1973) found that individuals who believed they agreed with another person and then had that expectation disconfirmed and individuals who expected disagreement and had it confirmed were most likely to initiate communication with the other person. In an organizational setting, this finding would indicate that individuals in public relations roles are most likely to initiate communication when they perceive disagreement between the organization and the public.

In short, we would expect that organizations will communicate with external subsystems much like their internal subsystems

communicate with one another. For this reason this study included data on the extent of diachronic and synchronic communication outside the organization.

There are also similarities between external and internal communication in regard to the "linking pin" individual. According to Schein (1970:110), "the organization is linked to its environment through key people who occupy positions in both the organization and some environmental system." These individuals are usually referred to as "boundary personnel" (March and Simon, 1958:165; Hall, 1972:319; Perrow, 1972:153; Wilensky, 1967:47; Evan, 1966:180). Evan (1966:177) says the "role-set" of boundary personnel differs from that of non-boundary personnel in that the former have relatively more external than internal contact. Guetzkow (1966:20-21) adds, however, that boundary personnel suffer important strains because of their outside orientation. For example, management personnel working with unions often are viewed by others as "union men." For this reason, Guetzkow points out that outside "fixers" often are brought in to handle inter-organizational relations, e.g. public relations counsel brought in at a time of crisis.

Blau and Scott (1962:138) conclude that boundary personnel must have multiple contacts if they are to receive "challenging stimulation." This suggests that public relations roles should be defined as boundary roles if the organization is to engage in diachronic communication with its environment. For this reason, two variables related to boundary position were included in the study: the relative degree of internal and external contact by public relations people and the extent to which public relations personnel identify with the organization as opposed to the public.

Closely related to these variables is Katz and Kahn's (1966:231) distinction between coping and defensive reactions to an information overload:

> **Coping or adaptive mechanisms are concerned with solving the problems which the individual encounters. Defensive mechanisms protect the individual from breakdown but do not solve the problem.**

These variables were included in the study with the expectation that problem-solving organizations would have a coping reaction to information coming through their boundaries while routine-habit organizations would exhibit a defensive reaction.

In addition to reacting to information inputs originating in the environment, organizations also consciously provide information *to* the environment. Most of the literature indicates that these organizations direct information outward in order to propagandize other organizations and publics (Guetzkow, 1966) or to build organizational prestige (Evan, 1966; Perrow, 1961; Thompson, 1967:33). While organizational theorists generally equate such "public relations" procedures with *persuasive* techniques or propaganda, recent communication research would suggest that prestige could be developed as well through promoting *understanding* of the organization's attributes (McLeod and Chaffee, 1973)—two variables which were therefore included in this study.

Perrow (1961) suggests that organizations attempt to build prestige either through *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* criteria. Intrinsic criteria are directly related to the products or services which the organization produces, such as "the durability and efficiency of an automobile, relative to its price." Extrinsic characteristics are not directly related to the output of the organization, such as entertainment programs sponsored on television or the "hotel" aspects of hospitals. Perrow maintains that organizations turn to extrinsic criteria when their products and services are difficult to distinguish from those of their competitors. The relative stress on intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) criteria was measured in this study, therefore, in the expectation that organizations would promote extrinsic attributes more often in the synchronic mode and intrinsic attributes in the diachronic mode.

While public relations practitioners generally think of the recipients of their efforts as individuals in a general audience or as members of specialized publics, there is evidence from the organizational literature that relations with other organizations are the most crucial linkages between organizations and their environments. Several theorists describe an "organizational set"—a group of organizations which have frequent communication with one another (Evan, 1966:179; Hall, 1972:313; Aiken & Hage, 1968). Esman (1972:23-24) describes four types of linkages which he considers necessary for an organization's survival (all were included in this study):

1) *Enabling* linkages, with organizations and social groups which control the allocation of authority and resources needed by the institution to function.

2) *Functional* linkages, with those organizations performing functions and services which are complementary in a production sense, which supply the inputs and which use the outputs of the institution.
3) *Normative* linkages, with institutions which incorporate norms and values (positive or negative) which are relevant to the doctrine and program of the institution.
4) *Diffused* linkages, with elements in the society which cannot clearly be identified by membership in formal organizations.

Public relations people often express concern about their relations with "thought" leaders, opinion leaders and key officials—i.e., a concern with maintaining good relations with individuals holding key positions in other organizations.

The final communication variable included in the study also relates to the nature of "the public." Economist Mancur Olson (1971) theorizes that the size and cohesiveness of groups determines their success in securing "public goods" for themselves: goods which when provided to one individual in a group cannot be withheld from others in the group. An example would be a wage settlement gained by a labor unit which benefits everyone in a particular company or industry.

In Olson's theory, an individual in a large, diffuse group has little incentive to participate in securing public goods shared by many others, since his marginal return is small in relation to his efforts. Unless such a group uses coercion to gain participation (as many labor unions do), individual members will generally not participate and the group will have little power *vis á vis* other organizations. In a small, cohesive group, however, the return for the efforts of an individual closely approximates his inputs because the public goods need not be as widely shared. Small, cohesive groups would thus have greater power in securing public goods. If we extend this notion to the publics to which public relations practitioners communicate we could conclude that challenges from small, cohesive groups in the environment would be attended to much more readily than challenges from large, diffuse groups.

Professionalization variables. Professionalization of public relations is an important goal for practitioners in general and the Public Relations Society of America in particular. To the extent that an individual practitioner is a professional, we would expect his activities to be less dependent on the nature of the organiza-

tion for which he works, being guided more by professional than organizational norms.

According to Wilensky (1964), a professional has two characteristics: 1) technical skills based on systematic knowledge acquired through long prescribed training and 2) adherence to a set of professional norms. Studies have shown that professionals have more discretion in organizations than do non-professionals, that organizations employing professionals experience more conflict, and that organizations are less formalized when they employ professionals (Hull, 1967, 1968; Kornhauser, 1963; Bell, 1967; Thompson, 1967; Gardner, 1964). Research also shows organizations generally do not choose to hire professionals unless they have little choice (Perrow, 1972:27), and that problem solving organizations are most likely to hire professionals (Bennis, 1959).

Wilensky (1964:142, 146) states that occupations in which a market orientation is overwhelming—"public relations, advertising and funeral directing"—will have difficulty professionalizing because they cannot maintain an exclusive jurisdiction. In occupations specializing in social and human relations skills, maintaining jurisdiction is especially difficult, Wilensky says, because "the language sounds familiar to everyone."

In this study four scales were used to measure professionalization. Two were developed by Wilensky (1964:152-3) to distinguish between a "professional" and a "careerist" orientation. The first scale asks respondents to rank reference groups which might judge the quality of their work with the expectation that professionals should rank fellow professionals and leaders of professional organizations highest, while careerists should rank superiors in their organizations highest. Wilensky's second scale asks which values are most important in a job. Professionals should stress technical tasks, autonomy, service and recognition from other professionals while careerists should stress income, status in the organization, security and recognition from superiors.[14]

The two other scales were developed by Hage and Aiken (1966:80). Their index of professional activity is based on belonging to a professional organization, attending its meetings and presenting programs or holding office. Their index of professional training increases with training beyond a bachelor's degree and with specialized professional training.

Several problems were taken into consideration in designing the data collection phase of the study. First, the study was one of organizations rather than of individuals. It is difficult, however, to measure or interview an organization. Blau and Schoenherr (1971:6) point out, however, that the attributes of an organization are represented only once: "It has only one personnel system, only one size, only one hierarchy of authority." Thus they conclude that the impact of such attributes cannot be determined in a case study (common to organizational research) and that it is necessary to sample a large number of organizations.

Blau and Schoenherr's reasoning would indicate that many questions about organizational attributes (e.g. size, or presence of an organization chart) can be answered objectively by most informed members of an organization. For other attributes, however (e.g., decentralization of decision-making), different individuals in an organization might assign different scores. For such attributes, researchers such as Hage and Aiken have administered a questionnaire to many members of each organization and computed an average score to characterize the organization.

Limited resources made it necessary to select only one member of each organization, the top official of the public relations unit. Most questions about the organizational structure could be answered objectively. For a few variables, however, there was no choice but to ask an opinion.

The population for this study was defined as all organizations hiring public relations practitioners in the Baltimore-Washington area. Cost dictated a mail questionnaire rather than personal interviews. Proximity to the University of Maryland encouraged telephone follow-ups. Finally, nearly every type of organization is represented: manufacturing; federal, state, and local government; the military, hospitals, church denominations and voluntary associations. Trade associations and independent public relations counselors were excluded because they provide public relations services to many diverse organizations.

The sample itself was drawn from a directory of public information contacts in the federal government, the associate members of the Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association, members of the Maryland and National Capital chapters of the Public Relations Society of America, members of the Prince

Georges County (Maryland) Public Relations Association and other known organizations in the area whose public relations practitioners did not appear on these lists.

A total sample of 315 people yielded 216 usable responses (19 were omitted because respondents said they were not in public relations or because of an incorrect address or an incomplete form.) A total response rate of 75 percent was about the same from each list except the federal government list, which was about 50 percent.

The mail questionnaire was appropriate for this study because the questionnaire and the sample met the requirements generally put forward for use of a mail questionnaire. The respondents were a select group with a strong interest in the subject, they were generally well educated, and they were generally of a higher socio-economic status. And the hypotheses were relatively precise and could easily be stated in the form of closed-ended questions (Miller, 1970:76-86; Hochstim and Athanasopoulos, 1970).

For each set of variables—independent, dependent and mediating—each variable was correlated with every other. These intercorrelations were then arranged into three correlation matrices, one each for organizational characteristics, communication procedures and professional variables. These matrices were factor analyzed to determine major dimensions of each set of variables. Factor scores were computed for each individual on each factor. The resulting dimensions of the organizational variables were correlated with the dimensions of the communication variables, both with and without the professionalization dimensions partialled out. A Q-factor analysis of organizations was conducted to determine if the resulting typologies of organizations (based on all 70 variables at once) approximated the types of organizations predicted by the decision modes.

Results

Types of Organizations. In the first stage of the analysis, factor analysis was used to develop typologies of organizations based on the 35 problem recognition, constraint and structural variables in a conscious attempt to find support for or against the decision-situation model. The computer was instructed first to extract four factors in an attempt to duplicate the four hypothesized decision

types. However, 17 of the 35 variables loaded highest on one of these four factors, and this one factor contained nearly all of the problem recognition and constraint variables. The other three factors split most of the structural variables into a pattern that made little theoretical sense.

TABLE 1

Factor Loadings of Problem Recognition, Constraint, and Structural Variables Based on a Two-Factor Solution

	Problem-Solving Organizational Factor	Fatalistic Organizational Factor
Problem Recognition:		
Code rigidity	.004	.188
Importance of tradition	.153	.499
Programmed behavior	.099	.499
Constraints:		
Demand (declining, high)	-.085	.174
Competition (great deal, high)	.074	.269
Social-Political (opposed, high)	.114	.172
Knowledge (not expanding, high)	-.036	.281
Technology (routine, high)	.047	.429
Mechanization (highly, high)	.329	.135
Structural Variables:		
Total size	.747	.021
Size of PR staff	.543	-.051
Complexity--occupations	.390	.124
Complexity--education	-.005	-.248
Complexity--authority levels	.348	.241
Complexity--location	.425	-.005
Centralization--PR clearance	.401	.056
Centralization--PR policy	.073	.241
Centralization--decision making	-.119	.302
Power of PR department	-.002	-.347
PR authority level	.062	-.384
Formalization--organization chart	.453	-.057
Formalization--job description	.290	-.229
Formalization--rules	.393	-.104
Formalization--employee orientation	.472	-.035
Stratification--status	.353	.292
Stratification--mobility	.050	.486
Amount of production	.062	.047
Efficiency	.276	.025
Age	.404	.210
Coercive compliance patterns	.179	.227
Utilitarian compliance patterns	.268	-.178
Normative compliance patterns	.073	-.384
Long-linked technology	.391	-.012
Mediating technology	-.188	.217
Intensive technology	-.058	-.192

Since the problem recognition and constraint variables were strongly related, it was not possible to produce the four decision types based on combinations of these two dimensions. Additional factor analyses were run, specifying three- and two-factor solutions. The three-factor solution had one factor on which only a few variables loaded highest, so the two-factor solution was chosen for further analysis.

As Table 1 shows, this two-factor solution made a great deal of theoretical sense. The two factors closely approximated what organization theorists have called dynamic vs. static, organic vs. mechanistic, open vs. closed organizations. Earlier, we had conceptualized these differences in terms of the communication behavior model as being those between problem solving and routine habit organizations. The factor solutions in Table 1 make it clear, however, that the differences are instead those between problem solving and fatalistic organizations. All of the problem recognition variables—code rigidity, importance of tradition and programmed behavior—loaded highest on one factor. But so did all of the constraints with the exception of mechanization.

In addition to being closed systems, the Factor II organizations also utilized technology which was routine and unchanging and knowledge which was not expanding. To a lesser extent they faced a great deal of competition, declining demand and social-political opposition. In short, the results suggest that when organizations become constrained by their technology and knowledge, they also fail to recognize problems and become closed—*i.e.*, the combination of constraints and a closed sytem makes them fatalistic. This, of course, is an explanation much like that of Burns and Stalker, Crozier, and Woodward. The finding that declining demand, a great deal of competition and social-political opposition also characterize the fatalistic factor was not expected, however. Perhaps it is the combination of restrictive technology and stagnant knowledge, along with outside pressure, that causes organizations to close themselves off from their environment.

Loadings of the structural characteristics on these two factors also fit well with our expectations from the literature. Problem solving organizations represented by Factor 1 are more complex and less centralized, have a public relations department with more power located higher in the hierarchy, allow employees more

mobility, stress efficiency more and stress utilitarian compliance patterns more than coercive patterns.

The one deviation from the pattern of less centralization in Factor 1 problem-solving organizations is that their public relations clearance procedure is more centralized. The original question had asked how many people at different levels of authority generally cleared information from the public relations department. Responses were coded so that a high score meant that the public relations practitioner had little autonomy and had to have his work cleared at many levels—*i.e.*, that decision would not have been delegated to him. In retrospect, the question probably should have been coded in the opposite direction. The more levels of clearance, the more decentralized would be the organization's decision to release information. In other words, the decision is made at several levels, and the public relations person serves mostly as the mouthpiece of a decentralized organization rather than of his immediate superior as he would in a centralized organization.

It was also surprising that organizational size, public relations staff size, formalization on all four formalization variables and age all loaded on the problem-solving factor. These results contradict in particular those of Hage and Aiken, who found dynamic organizations to be low in formalization as well as low in centralization and stratification.

Hage and Aiken, however, limited their analysis to relatively small governmental agencies. We included organizations ranging in size and complexity from a Chamber of Commerce to some of the largest corporations in the nation. It makes sense, therefore, that a complex organization—which Hage and Aiken found to be necessary for innovation—would also be large, and by necessity be formalized if it is to be managed. That these problem-solving organizations tend to be industrial firms is also indicated by a higher loading on long-linked technology (as well as mechanization) and a low loading on mediating technology. The fatalistic organizations in particular tend not to utilize intensive technology, as might also be expected.

In brief, this factor analysis suggested that problem-solving organizations tend to be large, complex and formalized. But, more importantly, they do not appear to be centralized and stratified.

Communication Procedures. To determine overall typologies of communication procedures, the 29 communication variables were also factor analyzed. Two factors were specified in an attempt to produce factors supporting the concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication.

The 16 public relations procedures loaded well on these two factors. The remaining communication variables, however, did not; they had low communalities (explained little variance) on the two factors. Therefore, the public relations procedures were factor analyzed separately, and additional factor analyses—using several factor solutions—were run on the remaining communication variables. Again, these remaining variables did not correlate with one another, so further analysis was done on these variables individually.

The public relations procedures fell into two factors which had variable loadings closely approximating synchronic and diachronic communication (Table 2), although "research to evaluate a project" did not load as highly on the synchronic factor as had been expected. In short, organizations appear either to do research or not to do it.

TABLE 2

Factor Loadings of Public Relations Variables, Based on a Two-Factor Solution

	Diachronic Procedures	Synchronic Procedures
Press releases	.188	.476
Formal surveys before project	.725	-.081
Formal surveys to evaluate project	.669	-.058
Informal research before project	.716	.092
Informal research to evaluate project	.655	.140
Preparing publications	.204	.312
Informal contacts with newsmen	.034	.548
Press conferences and formal contact with newsmen	-.018	.653
Informal contacts with public	.234	.097
Contacts with "thought leaders"	.411	.273
Staging events	.507	.249
Preparing audio-visual materials	.244	.522
Preparing institutional advertisements	.386	-.007
Counseling Management	.340	.422
Contacting governmental officials	-.190	.399
Writing speeches	.023	.574

In addition to formal and informal research, informal contacts with the public and contacts with "thought leaders" also loaded on the diachronic factor, as did staging events and preparing institutional advertisements (probably because only more sophisticated organizations use these procedures). "Counseling management" loads highly on both factors, but highest on the synchronic factor. In other words, those public relations practitioners who are most likely to counsel management are least likely to have information to give to management.

Professionalization Variables. It was quite apparent from the data that in this Baltimore-Washington sample there were few public relations "professionals"—at least as defined by the scales used in this study. All of the professionalization scales had a possible range of 0-3, so their means can be compared directly.

On the scale measuring opinions on who should evaluate a public relations practitioner, the mean was .58 on professional evaluation, 2.07 on careerist evaluation. On the value scale, the mean was 1.56 for professional values, 2.03 for careerist values. On the index of professional activity, the mean was .70—meaning the average practitioner is not even a member of PRSA and thus does not attend its meetings and hold office. The mean on the index of professional training was .93, which means the average practitioner has a B.S. and some training in public relations but that few have advanced degrees and training in public relations.

Table 3 shows the results of the factor analysis of these six professional-careerist variables into professional and careerist scales. Professional training was the most important variable on

TABLE 3

Factor Loadings for Professional and Careerist Variables, Based on a Two-Factor Solution

	Professional Factor	Careerist Factor
Professional evaluation	.273	.103
Careerist evaluation	.011	.373
Professional values	-.026	.272
Careerist values	.277	.725
Professional activity	.254	.034
Professional training	.713	-.168

the professional factor, careerist values on the careerist factor. Professional evaluation and professional activity loaded highest on the professional factor, but professional values loaded most highly on the careerist factor. The professional factor also had relatively high loadings for the careerist values. Finally, careerist evaluation and careerist values loaded highest on the careerist factor.

Correlation of Scales. The factor scores from these factor analyses of organizational characteristics, communication procedures and professionalism were then used to develop scales and to test the relationships among these scales. Table 4 presents the relationship between the organization-type scales and the communication scales and other variables.

In our conceptualization above, we had predicted that problem solving organizations would use diachronic procedures and that

TABLE 4

Correlations of Organization Type Scales with Public Relations Procedure Scales and Remaining Communication Variables

	Problem-Solving Organizational Factor	Fatalistic Organizational Factor
Diachronic public relations factor	-.004	-.134*
Synchronic public relations factor	.342**	-.357**
External information giving (low) seeking (high)	.128**	-.082
Intrinsic (low), extrinsic (high) appeals	-.034	-.176*
Public relations goal--persuasion (low), understanding (high)	-.005	-.227**
Crisis defense (low), crisis coping (high)	-.091*	-.214**
Orientation: organization (low), public (high)	-.025	-.021
Boundary location: internal (low), external (high)	.110*	-.187*
Enabling linkages	-.035	.033
Functional linkages	-.025	.021
Normative linkages	-.010	.032
Diffused linkages	.090	-.110*
Pressure group response: small (low), large (high)	.009	-.021
Internal communication: down (low), up (high)	-.217**	-.225**
Internal communication: expressive (low), instrumental (high)	.060	-.152*

*Significant at .05 level.
**Significant at .01 level.

fatalistic organizations would communicate little. (We could not test the predictions for routine habit and constrained decision organizations because we did not find organizations of this type.)

As expected, Table 4 shows a weak but significant negative relationship between the scales for fatalistic organizations and diachronic public relations procedures. But it also shows a relatively strong and highly significant negative relationship between scales for fatalistic organizations and synchronic communication. Contrary to what our theory would predict, there was no correlation between the scale for problem solving organizations and diachronic procedures, but a relatively strong and highly significant relationship between the problem solving organization scale and the synchronic public relations scale.

At the same time, the correlations were generally low between the scales for types of organizations and the communication variables which did not load highly in the factor analysis of communication variables. The only significant correlations show that problem-solving organizations are more likely to seek than give information from outside the organization, to have an external boundary location, and to have more downward vertical than upward internal communication. Fatalistic organizations are significantly more likely to use intrinsic rather than extrinsic appeals, to have persuasion as a public relations goal, to defend the organization in time of crisis, to have an internal boundary location, not to pay attention to diffused linkages, to stress downward internal communication, and to use internal communications for expressive rather than instrumental purposes.

Variables which did not correlate significantly with either organizational type included organization vs. public orientation, enabling, functional and normative linkages, and response to different sizes of pressure groups. More than anything else, these nonsignificant variables—all of which required the respondent to think about his publics—probably show that practitioners had not previously thought about and classified their publics and thus tended to give random responses when confronted with these questions.

Although most of these correlations are low, they do generally support the hypothesized relations. An important deviation from the theory, however, is the strong correlation between the scales

for problem solving organizations and synchronic procedures. Perhaps if the synchronic factor is re-titled as simply the information-giving factor, the results can be interpreted more readily.

The role of the public relations practitioner has been institutionalized in most organizations as an information-giving role. Undoubtedly, few organizations have defined the practitioner's role as including information-seeking, and therefore he is seldom expected to do so. Problem-solving organizations probably use the public relations person to announce the result of their problem solving decisions (his goal is not that of persuasion in this type of organization). These organizations probably seek information from the environment through roles other than that of public relations.

From Table 4 it appears that public relations practitioners in fatalistic organizations do nothing. This is what the theory would predict, but it hardly seems likely that an organization would hire a public relations specialist to do nothing. One explanation is the difference in total size and in size of the public relations department in these two types of organizations. Since there are fewer public relations people in a fatalistic organization, that kind of organization could not carry out as many public relations activities and that scale would thus show a lower correlation with both public relations procedures scales.

The other explanation may lie in the correlations with the four types of linkages. All but one of the linkage correlations are nonsignificant, but the fatalistic scale correlates positively with all of the linkages except the diffused, while the problem-solving scale correlates positively only with the diffused linkage. In other words, it is possible that practitioners in fatalistic organizations spend their time maintaining important interpersonal linkages that protect the organization from change.

Part of the reason public relations people do little information seeking in problem-solving organizations is also apparent in Tables 5 and 6. The professional scale correlates significantly, but not highly, with the information-seeking scale (Table 6), but there is no correlation between professionalism and information giving and between careerism and either scale. Likewise, there was no correlation between the problem-solving scale and either the professional or careerist scales (Table 5). The fatalistic organization scale

correlated negatively with the professional scale and positively with the careerist scale. (Both correlations are significant but low.)

TABLE 5

Correlations of Organization Type Scales with Professional and Careerist Scales

	Problem-Solving Organizations	Fatalistic Organizations
Professionals	.042	-.136*
Careerists	.046	.159**

*Significant at .05 level.
**Significant at .01 level.

TABLE 6

Correlations of Professional and Careerist Scales with Public Relations Procedure Scales

	Professionals	Careerists
Information-seeking procedures	.123*	-.037
Information-giving procedures	.070	-.041

*Significant at .05 level.

In other words, professionals are somewhat more likely to engage in information seeking, but problem solving organizations do not hire them, probably because so few are available. Thus we have a "vicious circle" of organizations not defining the public relations role as information seeking and of practitioners who can do information seeking being unavailable even if the organizations wanted them.

Because of the low correlations between the professional and careerist scales with the organization types, partialling out the effect of professionalism had no effect on the correlations between organization types and the communication variables. Again, there were few professionals (as defined here) in the sample, making it difficult to test the mediating effect of professionalism on the relationship between organization types and public relations procedures.

Correlations Between Communication Behavior Dimensions and Communication Procedures. In the previous factor analyses of organizational characteristics, the three problem-recognition variables and six constraint variables generally came out on the same factor. Thus it was possible to extract only two, rather than four, organization types based on the decision-situation model. It would appear, then, that these two dimensions either are not independent or that there simply are no routine habit and constrained decision organizations as there are individuals.

To determine which of these explanations was the more valid, the problem-recognition variables were summed into a single problem-recognition scale, and the constraint variables were summed into a single constraint scale. Each scale then was correlated with each of the communication variables, and the effect of the second scale was partialled out. Then, a step-wise multiple regression was conducted to determine which of the two dimensions explained most of the variance for each communication variable.

TABLE 7

Correlations and Beta Weights for the Relationship Between Problem Recognition, Constraints, and Information-Seeking Procedures.

	Zero-Order Correlation	First-Order Partial	Beta Weights
Problem recognition[1/]	.125*	.144*	.149
Constraints	.051 (Multiple R= .152*)	.088	.091

1/ Direction of this variable is reversed from that of previous tables.
* Significant at .05 level.

The results of these correlations between the two dimensions and the synchronic and diachronic scales are presented in Tables 7 and 8. The tables show that the two dimensions have a separate and quite interesting effect. The constraint dimension has an independent negative correlation with information-giving that is highly significant and relatively large. Problem recognition has no relationship to information giving. Problem recognition, on the other hand, is positively and independently related to information seeking while constraints have no relationship (the problem-

TABLE 8

Correlations and Beta Weights for the Relationship Between Problem Recognition, Constraints, and Information-Giving Procedures.

	Zero-Order Correlation	First-Order Partial	Beta Weights
Problem Recognition	.090	.027	.027
Constraints	-.242** (Multiple R = .243)	-.242**	-.235

**Significant at .01 level.

recognition correlation is significant but weak). Likewise, Table 9 shows that the constraint dimension has a slight and significant relationship with the careerist scale, while Table 10 shows a similar relationship between problem recognition and the professional scale.

TABLE 9

Correlations and Beta Weights for the Relationship Between Problem Recognition, Constraints, and the Careerist Scale

	Zero-Order Correlation	First-Order Partial	Beta
Problem Recognition	-.107*	-.077	-.079
Constraints	.126* (Multiple R = .147)	.102	.105

*Significant at .05 level.

TABLE 10

Correlations and Beta Weights for the Relationship Between Problem Recognition, Constraints, and the Professional Scale

	Zero-Order Correlation	First-Order Partial	Beta
Problem Recognition	.148*	.139*	.144
Constraints	-.055 (Multiple R = .149)	-.056	-.016

*Significant at .05 level.

Finally, Table 10 shows a step-wise multiple regression analysis of the other communication variables with which one of the two

dimensions had a significant simple correlation. The pattern is similar. Problem recognition is related to orientation to the public more than to the organization, upward internal communication and coping in times of crisis. Constraints, on the other hand, contribute to explaining persuasion as a public relations goal, downward internal communication and internal expressive communication. Again, the correlations are independent of the effects of the second dimension.

It seems, therefore, that the two dimensions have independent effects on communication, even though most organizations possess both characteristics concurrently. Problem recognition is related to information seeking, professionalization and coping with the environment. Constraints, on the other hand, suppress information giving, are related to careerism, and lead to persuasion as a goal, probably through interpersonal means.

These findings offer a better explanation than our previous results. Problem recognition does not discourage information giving, and the absence of constraints encourages it. Thus problem-solving organizations give information. Problem recognition encourages organizations to seek information and to hire professional public relations people. But since few professionals are available, both relationships are weak in the data available. The final step of the analysis, Q-factor analysis, will, however, further isolate the relationship between problem solving organizations, professionalism, and diachronic communication.

Q-Factor Analysis. In contrast to the R correlations and factor analyses used here, Q factor analysis involves the correlation and factoring of people rather than of variables. The same data are analyzed from a different perspective, the end result being typologies of people (in this case organizations) based on all variables in the study, rather than typologies of variables based on all people in the study. The advantage of Q analysis is that it allows the researcher to see the relationship of all the variables at once within the unit of analysis—here the organization—rather than relationships among a few variables at a time. In the R analysis reported above, the variables were also reduced to a few major ones so that the results of a Q factor analysis should not differ greatly from results already reported.

TABLE 11

Multiple Correlation Relationships Between Problem Recognition, Constraints, and Five Communication Variables.

	Simple R	Multiple R	Beta
PR Goal: Persuasion (low), understanding (high)			
Constraints	-.211	.211	-.207
Problem Recognition	.069	.211	.013
Crisis Defense (low), coping (high)			
Problem Recognition	.181	.181	.169
Constraints	-.087	.185	-.042
Orientation: Organization (low), public (high)			
Problem Recognition	.136	.136	.126
Constraints	-.06	.140	-.035
Internal Communication: Down (low), Up (high)			
Problem Recognition	.161	.161	.142
Constraints	-.108	.174	-.070
Internal Communication: Expressive (low), Instrumental (high)			
Constraints	-.162	.162	.149
Problem Recognition	.087	.168	.048

In a Q factor analysis of survey data, it is first necessary to transform all variables into Z-scores because each variable is generally not on the same scale. Here, the factor loadings are less important than in an R factor analysis. In Q, these loadings tell us only which people (organizations) were most typical of each factor or type, not why the organizations are similar. The important data in a Q study are the factor scores (scores for each variable on each factor), which reveal the relationships among variables which produced the types.

Since the data were the same as in the R analysis, only two organization types were expected; therefore, only two factors were extracted. Existing Q factor analysis programs will handle only 109 people, so the sample had to be split in half. This was done two ways, in the middle and randomly, to produce, in essence, four replications of the analysis.

Three of the four runs produced almost identical results. When the computer program used encounters a factor on which 25% or more of the "people" load negatively, it splits off negative loaders

to form an additional type. In the three similar runs, one factor had approximately 50% negative loadings and thus yielded three types of organizations. In the fourth run, the second factor also had slightly over 25% negative loadings, so four types resulted. These types were similar to those produced in the other runs in that each had a fatalistic type and two to three problem solving types. The Q analysis reported in Tables 12-14 was the run which

TABLE 12

Comparison, in Z-scores, of the Organizational Characteristics of Three Types of Public Relations Situations

	Problem-Solving Professional	Careerist	Fatalistic
Size--total	-1.4	.7	.2
Size--PR staff	-1.2	- .3	- .4
Complexity--occupations	- .6	.0	.4
Complexity--education	.6	- .9	- .4
Complexity--authority levels	-1.2	- .1	1.3
Complexity--location	- .4	.0	1.0
Centralization--PR clearance	- .8	- .4	1.4
Centralization--PR policy	-1.8	-1.3	1.4
Centralization--decision making	- .3	- .6	.2
Power--PR department	2.2	1.3	-2.1
PR Authority level	1.6	2.0	-1.6
Formalization--organization chart	-1.8	- .2	- .2
Formalization--job description	-1.4	- .3	-1.1
Formalization--rules	-1.0	.4	- .6
Formalization--employee orientation	- .8	.7	.8
Stratification--status	- .8	.6	.6
Stratification--mobility	- .8	- .5	1.6
Amount of production	- .6	-1.4	- .0
Efficiency	- .0	1.6	.7
Code Rigidity	.3	.3	1.6
Importance of tradition	-1.5	-1.0	1.5
Programmed behavior	-1.5	-1.5	1.3
Age	-2.4	1.1	1.3
Constraints--demand (declining, high)	-1.3	-1.4	1.2
Coercive compliance patterns	- .7	- .5	.9
Utilitarian compliance patterns	.2	- .3	- .2
Normative compliance patterns	1.0	.1	-1.1
Constraints--competition (great deal, high)	- .6	.4	1.2
Constraints--social-political (opposed, high)	- .3	.1	.2
Constraints--knowledge (not expanding, high)	- .7	-1.5	1.4
Constraints--technology (routine, high)	-1.1	-2.3	2.2
Constraints--mechanization (highly, high)	- .8	.5	.3
Long-linked technology	.1	1.9	1.3
Mediating technology	-1.1	- .7	- .6
Intensive technology	1.3	-1.3	.0

1 Z-scores range from -3 to +3; 0 is the mean, the standard deviation is 1. Generally 68 percent of the Z-scores will fall between +1 and -1, 95 percent between +2 and -1, and 99 percent between +3 and -3.

explained the most total variance. (It represented one of the samples chosen randomly.)

This Q analysis explains the relationship of professional public relations practitioners to the organization types fairly well. It also explains some of the anomalies of the R data. Of the three types of organizations, one clearly reflects the fatalistic type already encountered. The other two are both problem solving types, but one employs professional public relations practitioners, the other careerists. Table 12 supports this distinction.

TABLE 13

Comparison, in Z-Scores, of Professional and Careerist Variables for Three Types of Public Relations Situations

	Problem-Solving		
	Professional	Careerist	Fatalistic
Professional Evaluation	1.1	-1.5	- .2
Careerist Evaluation	- .6	.1	.6
Professional Values	- .0	- .5	- .0
Careerist Values	- .3	- .5	.8
Professional Activity	- .4	-1.1	-1.2
Professional Training	.9	-1.4	- .8

Table 13 compares the three types of organizations on the problem recognition, constraint and structural variables. The problem solving types differ from the fatalistic types in ways already discussed in previous analyses. However, there are some important differences between the two problem solving types. The problem-solving, professional type is smaller, has a smaller public relations staff, is younger, has more complexity in educational requirements, is less formalized on all formalization variables, places less emphasis on efficiency and utilizes more intensive technology and less long-linked technology than does the problem-solving, careerist type. The professional type appears to represent a young, dynamic organization dedicated to a cause wherein the public relations role is not yet institutionalized, an organization much like the "intermediate" organization which Landau believed should be most innovative.

Table 14 shows, as in the R analysis, that the fatalistic type is below average on all communication variables except press releases, informal contacts with newsmen, institutional advertise-

ments and all of the linkages. This also suggests what public relations practitioners do in these organizations: they service the press, but mostly in time of crisis (see negative score on crisis defense), and they handle important interpersonal linkages.

TABLE 14

Comparison, in Z-Scores, of Communication Variables for Three Types of Public Relations Situations

	Problem-Solving Professional (n=31)	Careerist (n=43)	Fatalistic (n=33)
Press Releases	- .0	2.3	1.0
Formal Surveys Before Project	1.0	.6	- .1
Formal Surveys to Evaluate Project	.9	1.2	- .1
Informal Research Before Project	1.0	- .6	-1.5
Informal Research to Evaluate Project	.9	.3	-1.6
Preparing Publications	- .2	-1.2	-1.3
Informal Contacts with Newsmen	.7	2.2	.1
Press Conferences & Formal Contact with Newsmen	- .0	.8	-1.1
Informal Contacts with Public	1.4	.5	- .9
Contacts with "Thought Leadens"	1.3	1.1	-1.5
Staging Events	.7	1.0	- .6
Preparing Audio-Visual Materials	.8	.4	-1.0
Preparing Institutional Advertisements	- .1	1.5	.5
Counseling Management	1.5	1.5	- .9
Contacting Governmental Officials	1.8	.8	-1.9
Writing Speeches	.3	.1	- .8
External Information Giving (low), Seeking (high)	.5	- .5	-1.3
Intrinsic (low), Extrinsic (high) Appeals	1.5	- .1	- .2
PR Goal--Persuasion (low), Understanding (high)	.4	-1.1	- .4
Crisis Defense (low), Crisis Coping (high)	.0	- .8	-1.4
Orientation--Organization (low), Public (high)	1.0	- .2	.2
Boundary Location--Internal (low), External (high)	1.1	1.1	-1.0
Enabling Linkages	.4	.4	.4
Functional Linkages	.0	- .3	.2
Normative Linkages	- .3	-1.3	.9
Diffused Linkages	.0	.5	.5
Pressure Group Size--Small (low), Large (high)	.2	- .7	.2
Internal Communication--Down (low), Up (high)	1.2	- .4	- .7
Internal Communication--Expressive (low), Instrumental (high)	1.2	.3	- .6

The difference between the professional and careerist problem-solving types is clearly that between diachronic and synchronic communication. The careerist type is most likely to give information (issue press releases, have formal and informal contact with newsmen, prepare institutional ads, stage events), to give rather than seek information externally, to have persuasion as a goal

rather than understanding, to defend the organization in times of crisis, to be oriented to the organization rather than the public, and to use downward internal communication. The professional type does all types of research, but the careerist type is slightly more likely to do formal surveys to *evaluate* a project and about as likely to do formal research to *evaluate* a project as is the professional. Both, however, are equally likely to counsel management.

Since there were more organizations of the careerist type than the professional type, these results also explain the weak correlation between problem-solving organizations and diachronic procedures and the moderately strong correlation between problem solving organizations and synchronic procedures. Some but not all organizations scoring high on the type were using one or the other of the procedures.

Conclusions and Implications

At this point, the picture appears to be complete. There is a clear relationship between the behavioral type of an organization, the professionalism of its public relations practitioner and the types of communication procedures it utilizes.

Basically, we have found that organizations are either fatalistic—a closed system with a constrained technology and level of knowledge—or problem-solving—an open system facing few constraints. The problem-solving and constraint dimensions, however, have independent effects. Problem recognition encourages internal and external information seeking, professionalism, orientation to the public, understanding as a goal and crisis coping. Constraints discourage information giving, encourage downward and expressive internal communication and persuasion as a goal.

The fact that only two types of decision situations could be found, however, shows an interesting deviation of organizational behavior from individual behavior. Organizations appear to be much more reactive systems than are individuals. When organizations face constraints from their environment, they close themselves off. When they face few constraints they become open and innovative. Unlike people, however, organizations seem incapable of recognizing their constraints (constrained decision) or of closing themselves off from the environment when it offers opportunities (routine habit).

Fatalistic organizations hire public relations practitioners only to defend them in the press at time of crisis and to maintain essential interpersonal linkages. These practitioners can indeed be called "flaks," or in more theoretical terms careerists.

Even problem-solving organizations, however, utilize few professional practitioners, first, because few professionals are available and, second, because even problem-solving organizations become older, larger and more formalized; they form decision rules which apparently institutionalize the public relations function as one which gives information on decisions made by the rest of the organization but assigns public relations little role in those decisions.

Only problem-solving organizations which are new, small, less formalized and which utilize intensive technology are likely to hire public relations professionals and to assign them a role giving them flexibility to engage in diachronic public relations.

What are the implications of these findings for public relations practitioners and their training? First, there is little hope for professional public relations in fatalistic organizations, in which practitioners cannot truly be said to be engaging in public relations.

Second, problem-solving organizations which are large and formalized need to be educated about the function of diachronic public relations. Dr. Carl Hawver, the 1974 Public Relations Society of America chairman, stated the problem well in his address to the 1973 PRSA convention, as reported in the Nov. 19, 1973, issue of *PR Reporter*:

> Pres. Nixon's basic problem . . . arose because he didn't have professional PR people on his staff, so he was shut off from the "real world." Operating in such a vacuum, effective communication was "almost impossible."
>
> Many corporations, too, . . . have developed their messages in soundproof towers and shouted them to target publics which weren't listening or "didn't believe." These publics . . . have in turn been asking the corporations questions; but there again, few have been listening, since most corporate "communication machines" are designed to transmit but not receive. The sharp drop in the credibility of most U.S. institutions . . . has brought an awakening to the need for professionally conceived programs which will project truth to the listener, . . . that the message must be designed with the background of a specific public in mind so that it will be fully understood (and) that the real questions in the minds of these publics must be answered.

Finally, if public relations education is to be professionalized so that true professionals will be available to fill the role which Hawver described, they will need training in communication theory, research methods and professional ethics and social responsibility so that they can truly become information seekers, applied social scientists and diachronic communicators. And perhaps they will need training that will make them aware of the impact of the organization upon them, the pitfalls of working with some kinds of organizations and how to change the role of public relations in problem-solving, but formalized organizations.

Such a newly professionalized student might also ask how he can tell whether a potential employer is a problem-solving, professional organization and how to avoid a fatalistic organization. The study gives a reasonably clear answer. He can isolate the fatalistic organizations by asking questions about centralization (who makes key decisions in this organization?), mobility (how fast does it normally take to get promoted?) and programmed behavior (how much flexibility would I have in my job?). He can isolate the problem-solving, professional from the problem-solving, careerist organization by asking about the size of the organization and its PR staff (smaller ones are better in both cases), formalization (is there a job description for my position and will I be penalized if I deviate from it?) and educational complexity (what percent of the employees must have a college degree in this organization?)

FOOTNOTES

1. For a more complete discussion of general systems theory, see Ruben (1972), Katz and Kahn (1966), Olson (1972).

2. Kuhn (1970) has conceptualized the paradigm as a gestalt which determines what a scientist perceives as a relevant research problem and which also determines the rules or methodology which he adopts.

3. A paradigm shift first articulated by Carter (1969) in his head's address to the Communication Theory and Methodology Division of the Association for Education in Journalism.

4. Information, when this approach is used, can be simply defined as a message which helps an individual gain a single, clear picture of his situation. If a message confuses a picture or contributes to a non-singular picture it can be defined as noise.

5. A third dimension of this theory, the level of involvement, has recently been developed (Grunig, 1976). Level of involvement is a concept which Krugman (1965) used to explain the effect of television advertising. When a person is not involved in a situation or in a problem, his behavior is less purposive—i.e., he is not motivated to direct his movement and to communicate in order to better control his movement. A person who is not involved in a situation, however, does not resist information about that situation if someone else gives it to him. But he does not purposively seek information nor does he make a decision about that situation, i.e., he is in a non-decision situation. When the matrix of Figure 1 is viewed for a low-involvement, non-decision situation, the behaviors are still generally the same, although less purposive. In the problem-facing and constrained behavior situations, the person generally does not attempt to direct his movement to control the situation because he is not actually involved in the situation. But because he recognizes a problem, he will be curious and will seek information about the situation and, in the problem-facing situation, will be motivated to become involved. In the routine habit and fatalistic situations, he will process information from others more often than when involvement is high, but he will not have much interest in the information. When the present study was conducted, level of involvement had not yet been incorporated into the theory. The argument may be made that organizational communication is limited to situations in which organizations are involved more than is individual communication. But the third dimension does open further possibilities for research on organizational communication.

6. The most common analogy for feedback is that of the function of the thermostat: to make certain the furnace achieves the desired temperature, not to get the furnace's picture of the situation. See Grunig (1973a) for an explication of feedback as reactive behavior. Ruben (1972:133) makes the same point.

7. Although environmental constraints often limit the alternatives of organizations (and thus their innovativeness), constraints can at times force non-innovative organizations to innovate. For example, in a study of a

community development agency, Grunig (1974a) found that racially mixed staffing patterns forced role occupants at all levels of the organization to communicate with the clientele.

8. Several theorists hold that technology is a major determinant of organizational structure, leadership patterns and innovativeness. Woodward (1965) set out in a study of British manufacturing firms to determine if common management rules worked in practice. She found instead that the most effective management rules and style depended on the technology of the firm. In Bell's (1967:102) words: ". . . more flexible patterns of organization will result from unpredictable and highly discretionary productive processes."

9. Hall (1972:298), similarly, discusses changing and unchanging technology.

10. See also Blau (1960).

11. A persistent theme, also, throughout Perrow's writings.

12. Both Redding (1966) and Smith, Richetto and Zima (1972) discuss the lack of management interest in, as well as research evidence on, upward communication.

13. Perrow (1970:195) in critiquing Wilensky's (1967) book, *Organizational Intelligence*, concludes: "But what is striking is the number of cases where it does not seem to be a failure of intelligence that was at stake; it was simply not in the interests of the leaders to use it."

14. McLeod and Hawley (1964) derived a professionalization index for newsmen based on Wilensky's scale, and some of their items were used in the scale in this study.

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